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NATURE.

HUMAN, SPIRITUAL, DIVINE.

[Original.]

THE DOCTRINE OF DEGREES.

BY W. S. COURTNEY.

You will find in the little work of Swedenborg, entitled "The Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom," Part III, a pretty clear exposition of the doctrine of degrees; and, truly, it furnishes an interesting subject of philosophic investigation. Let us think about it a little. There are said to be two sorts of degrees in all things—the one denominated *discrete* degrees, and the other *continuous* degrees; and it is all-important that we should have a clear perception of their difference, which importance will appear upon a further consideration of the subject. In fact, no progress can be made in true theology or philosophy, without a right understanding of those degrees.

The essential characteristic of continuous degrees, is their increase or decrease, from a low degree to a high degree, or from a less degree to a greater degree, of the *same* thing, and *vice versa*; as, for instance, from darkness to light, by inappreciable increase, or from heat to cold by imperceptible decrease. Darkness thus becoming light by regular increment or continuity of the *same* thing, and heat thus becoming cold by continuity or regular decrease of the *same* thing. So, also, of bitter, or a low degree of sweet, becoming, by increase, sweet, or a higher degree of the *same* thing. So, of short, by continuity, becoming long; low becoming, by continuity, high; dull, sharp; thick to thin; gross to fine; weak to strong, &c. &c. These are instances of *continuous* degrees in the physical and sensational world, and, like continuous degrees, obtain in the intelligent and emotional worlds; as, for instances, ignorance, or a low degree of knowledge, becoming, by regular increase or continuity, intelligence, or a higher degree of knowledge; or evil, which is only a low degree of good, becoming, by regular increment, a greater good. Thus in the sensational world, light, by continuity, shades off into darkness, heat

into cold, &c.; and you cannot put down your finger on the place where the one ceases and the other commences. So in the intelligent world, knowledge shades off into ignorance, and in the emotional world good shades off into evil. In all which instances the one differs from the other only by *continuity* of the *same* thing. The same low degree of heat which will freeze a man to death, to speak antithetically, increased in degree, will burn him to death. It is a question of *quantity*, and relates to or involves, *space*, and not of *quality* or *time*.—There is no *essential* or *specific* difference, further than in the *amount* of the *same* thing. Our physical organism is constructed for and adapted to, certain continuous degrees of the elements and objects around us, and it is the criterion which determines what is hot and what is cold, what is darkness and what is light, what is large and what is small; and if you alter this criterion you alter our appreciation of those degrees. For instance, if you augment our vision, the light of darkness will blind us, and mole hills will be mountains. If you increase our sense of smell, we "die of a rose in aromatic pain." If you increase our sense of hearing, we are "deafened by the music of the spheres," &c. &c. So, also, our moral and spiritual organisms are standards of what is knowledge and what is ignorance, or of what is good and what is evil; and as the standard develops and perfects, our appreciation of those degrees alter.

It is more difficult to perceive and understand the distinctive characteristic of discrete degrees. They are different, separate, and distinct, and are connected only by relation, or conjoined only by correspondence or the law of analogy. They occupy towards each other the relations of *end*, *cause*, and *effect*, or *prior*, *posterior*, and *postreme*. As continuous degrees relate to *space* and *quantity*, so discrete degrees relate to *time* and *quality*, and are, also, denominated first, middle, and last, and inmost, interior, and external.

This trinal order prevails in each and all things that exist, inasmuch as each thing has an end or inmost, *from* which it is; a cause or interior, *by* which it is; and an external, ultimate or effect, *in*

which it is. Hence it is evident that the one of those degrees is not, nor can not, become the other by continuity—*increase* or *decrease*—but by the *relations* of prior, posterior, and postreme, or inmost, interior, and outmost. The end can never become the cause, nor the cause the effect, by increase or decrease, as darkness becomes light or heat becomes cold, by increase and decrease, any more than the inmost can, by increase, become the outmost, or the first, by increase, become the last, or the centre, by increase, become the circumference. Those degrees are *relations* that cannot be altered by continuity. It is very true, that the cause is *in* the effect and the end *in* the cause, as the middle expanse is in the circumference and the centre in the middle expanse—all existing and subsisting together in the effect. Hence it is, that those degrees are called *simultaneous* degrees, as contradistinguished to *successive* degrees, or degrees by continuity, which do not exist together simultaneously, but *from* each other successively.

The great creation, and every part of it, is thus *discreted* into this trinal order of degrees. There is a sphere of *ends*—the inmost or celestial heavens; a sphere of *causes*—the middle or spiritual heavens; and a sphere of *effects*—the material universe. In God is this trinity. His Divine Love, the End of ends, His Inmost, *from* which are all things; His Divine Wisdom, the Cause of causes, *by* which are all things; and His operative or energizing sphere, or Holy Spirit, the effect, *in* which are all things. Man being a representative of God and the universe, has this trinal arrangement within him. His love or will is his inmost, or end, *from* which his intelligence, the cause, *by* means of which and his action, the effect in which he is.

Let me illustrate: Suppose I witness a brother in distress. My love, desire, or will, is to relieve him. This is the end *from* which, but without the cause or means *by* which to do it, I might burn forever with the desire to relieve him, and it would not be done. But the end, or desire, *discreted* itself into the cause, or means, which is my intelligence, and it is put in requisition, and

I devise various ways of relieving him. I go, perchance, and make his case known to others, who are able to assist him, or I go and raise him aid by contribution, or, perchance, go and sell some of my superfluous substance and give him, all which are divers means by which my end or desire is ultimated or accomplished in the action when done. Now it is clearly apparent that the end, will, or desire from whence the action proceeded, was one thing; the intelligence, or cause, by which it was done, another; and the action another. Nor could the one ever become the other by continuity of itself. I might increase or swell up my desire, or will, until it would wholly consume me, but unless and until it discretized itself into my intelligence, the sufferer is not relieved, because I would not know how to relieve him. So my intelligence, which points me out the way to do this good action, may brighten up by increase or continuity, to all eternity, and disclose to me myriad ways of relieving him, but unless it discretized itself into action, the brother suffers still. Hence, unless our love or good will goes forth by intelligence into action, or effect, we have no life, for an end is nothing without a cause, nor a cause anything without an effect. Therefore, *a man's life is in his actions*; and unless his life, or love, goes forth by his intelligence, into action, he has no self hood—is not individualized nor personalized. He is what he does: being is doing. We see that everything that men do, or can do, is done from an end, or desire, through or by means of their intelligence or rationality, and in their actions. The miser's love, delight, or will, is to accumulate riches; his intelligence, or reason, is the means he employs; and the accumulated treasure the effect. The ambitious man's love, or delight is power; his intelligence discloses to him the means of attaining it; and power attained is the result. In like manner the adulterer's delight, or love, is adultery, and that love discretizes itself into the means, which is his intelligence, cunning, deceit, scheming, &c., and the adulterous action the consequence. The love or delight of all men is thus, by their intelligence or wisdom, ultimated in their actions in which both their intelligence or wisdom, and love or desire, reside—the action being a continent or basis in which the other two degrees together are. From these illustrations it may plainly be seen that discrete degrees occupy the relation to each other, of end, cause, and effect, or of prior, posterior, and postreme, or of inmost, interior, or external, or, to speak of those degrees in the human spirit, of love, wisdom, and action—the one not being the other by continuity, but by discretization.

But as it is all important to the understanding of what is to be hereafter written, that we should have clear perceptions of the difference between and nature of discrete and continuous degrees, I am not satisfied without further illustration; therefore, I will adduce

some examples from the "lower kingdoms of nature." Take, for instance, the mineral—say a diamond. It has motion, and it has, discretized from that motion, an order of arrangement of its parts, or mode by which that motion proceeds and is determined into the angular form of the diamond. Thus in the diamond is motion, the end, and the order or manner by which that motion proceeds. Again, to bring an example from the vegetable kingdom, take the leaf. It has life, or an inmost vitalizing essence, (which typifies the Divine Love) and a form, or order, by which that life proceeds, and is elaborated in the external, (symbolizing the Divine Wisdom) and the leaf formed, the ultimate, or effect, (corresponding to the material creation.) Here it is seen that the life, or essence, of the leaf is one thing; the form, order, or mode by which it grows, another; and the leaf itself, another. They are distinct and separate, and conjoined only by correspondence; and yet, in the complex, they form a unit, just as the love, intelligence, and actions of a man, are distinct and separate, yet conjoined by correspondence forming a person; and just as the universe, celestial, spiritual, and natural, are separate and distinct, yet conjoined by correspondence, forming a unit. The motion in the diamond goes forth by its order of arrangement into the angular form of the diamond; life in the vegetable goes forth by its mode or manner of proceeding or elaborating into the leaf, apple, &c.; the love or desire of man goes forth by his intelligence into action. And the Divine Love, the inmost of all things, goes forth by the Divine Wisdom or Providence (which is the same thing,) into external material nature, the great action of God!

But if this trine of discrete degrees is in all things, from the least to the greatest—if in the leaf and in each fibre of the leaf—in each composite love, in each single thought and in each particular or intermediate action—where is the sphere or plane of operation for the continuous degrees? I will tell you. They are in each discrete degree; and then, again, a series of discrete degrees form the continuous degrees. And to illustrate this I will give you some examples. My love, or desire to relieve the aforesaid sufferer, may, in its inception, have been most inappreciably faint—so weak as scarcely to make me conscious of the emotion. But it increases by continuity—the same specific sentiment becoming, by regular increment, stronger and greater, until reaching a certain point, it changes or discretizes itself into a new form, namely—my intelligence, which again, in its dim and obscure beginning, may be inadequate to the satisfying my love, and it brightens and clears by regular increase, to a point where it plainly discovers to me and furnishes the means of ultimating my love, when it changes, or discretizes itself into action. A man may feel a desire to act, and yet it may not be strong enough to move him until it is increased suffi-

ciently in degree, when it discretizes itself into thought on the subject; and again his thought or intelligence may be confused and obscure—may not inform him of the way or means sufficiently clear and unequivocally to justify action until it is increased in degree so as to point clearly to the means, when it discretizes itself into action.—Again, the life in the seed or germ of the vegetable, may lay dormant for ages, until it is fomented and increased by continuity, when it assumes an order of arrangement of its particles, which order amplifies and enlarges until it discretizes itself into the vegetable formed. Thus you will see that each discrete degree is formed of an indefinite number or series of continuous degrees, from a less to a greater, by increase, until they change or discretize their order of existence into a new form. The one does not become the other by continuity, but by discretizing—the continuous degrees proceeding until discretization takes place. How and why they thus discretize, I am unable to say. But again, what are continuous degrees formed of? I answer, of a series of discrete degrees of the same kind. For instance, light is formed of an indefinite number of separate particles, each discretized from the other, yet all alike, which can be increased until darkness becomes light, &c. Thus ice is discretized from water, and yet by increasing the amount of heat in it continuously, it discretizes itself into water. And again, by increasing the heat of the water, it discretizes itself into steam. In like manner are the atmospheres discretized from each other. Hence, continuity is a series of discretized or distinct individualities increasing until they discretize into a new order—give birth to or develop a new species, which increases and runs again in continued series, until it again discretizes or changes into still another order or species, &c.

Now development, or the law of perpetual growth, proceeds according to this two-fold order. All things thus develop by continuity, or series, to a certain degree, when they discretize or change into a new order or species, distinct from the proceeding one, just as the end transfuses itself continuously into the cause, until it discretizes itself from it, and just as the cause transfuses itself continuously into the effect, forming it, until it discretizes itself from it. We will now illustrate this order by some examples. The mineral kingdom, which is composed of an indefinite series of discretized particles, or individuals, grows or develops by attenuation, or continuity, until it develops or discretizes itself into a low form or order of the vegetable kingdom, which is a new order of existence, developed from it; the one not being the other by continuity, but by discretization. So again the vegetable kingdom proceeded or grew continuously, by long series and groups of series, during many geological ages, until it produced or discretized into the lowest form of animal or sensational life, which again grew and perfected in continued series, until it

discreted into intelligent existence.—Hence, as Emerson says, “every ultimate fact is but the beginning of a new series.” For instance, in the vegetable kingdom, the potato goes round in a series of growth or development, continuously, until it passes into a new species. So the animal develops and perfects continuously, through a long series of generations, until it gives birth to a new species, discrete from the former. Those who wish to study this two-fold order of development, more in detail, will find it fully treated of in the “Vestiges of Creation,” although the author does not appear to have known that he was but applying and illustrating Swedenborg’s “Doctrine of Degrees.” The continuous degree of Swedenborg is Fourier’s law of the series, and his discrete degree Fourier’s law of the group or species. We see this order of development in the whole history of the human race, and it would be highly interesting to trace it out and exhibit how one form of social order continued in a series until it develops a new order of social life. How one dispensation passed in a series, until it gave birth to a new dispensation, &c. &c. But with this mere suggestion we will have to leave it to the reflection of the reader.

Now, *universality* is a quality of all the laws of celestial, spiritual, and material existence, and to them there are and can be no exceptions. There is no miracle, but phenomena or law, the universality of which we do not yet comprehend; and no mystery, but ignorance. Mystery is only a name given to the hazy and obscure unknown which yet lies beyond the dim and confused vision. The same law which governs and controls the planetary system, carrying forward the planets in their orbits, around the central sun, governs and controls the economy of a drop of water, or one of the little glands of our physical system, for they have their centripetal and centrifugal powers, by which they excrete and secrete—a magnetic centre and electric circumference. The same law which is the wisdom of the spiritual heavens, is plenary in my intelligence; and the same law, which is the love principle of the inmost or celestial angels, is universal in the heart of man. Moreover, when we come to consider things interiorly, or according to their spiritual and celestial uses, abstracted from space and time, or which is the same thing, quantity and succession, we find the uses or spiritual principle of the organs, fibres, viscera, &c., of the animalculum, by correspondence, the same as the uses of the viscera, functions, &c., of the Grand Universal Man. Great or small, first or last, are not conditions of their existence, and are no way implicated in their interior being. Spiritually, end, cause, and effect, are as perfect and omnipotent in the leaf as in the whole “complex of things,” just as a legal principle is as much involved in a suit when but five dollars are in controversy, as in a suit when the amount in dispute is fifty thousand dol-

lars. You can’t predicate great or small, first or last, of it. In like manner our love and intelligence are states of our spiritual being, and have nothing to do with, and are above, and beyond, and without, time and space. So God—the pure abstract Divine Love and Wisdom—is wholly independent of time and space, and the ideas of size, place, past, present, and future, do not at all attach to His proper Being.—Therefore, discrete degrees, spiritually considered, are the same everywhere. And if God is the inmost of all things—centralized or focalized divinity—a Man personal human divine, appearing in ordinary spiritual stature and parts, then is He discreted from His celestial, spiritual, and material universes, and conjoined with them only by correspondence. For if by continuity, then the conclusion is irresistible, that God and Nature are identical, which won’t satisfy our devotional instincts, tendencies, and wants. Let me illustrate this greatest spiritual truth by some examples. Were we to look at our solar system, from myriad millions of miles, it would appear to us a conglobated or solid mass, a unit, radiating its light and heat into the depths of space. But when we near it, it resolves into planets and satellites; and when we still near it, it discretizes itself into concentric atmospheres, then into concentric strata, until we reach an inmost centre, the brief focus of all its light and heat, which we can, as it were, grasp in our hand—which centre is discreted from the whole vast complex. So the Man-God—the centre of the spiritual universe, abstracted from time and space—is thus discreted from His grand universe, and yet instantly and constantly upholds it; and is immanent in every part of it, by His Holy Spirit or sphere. Again, I radiate a sphere to an indefinite extent around me, which, was it perceptible by your senses, would make me a giant. This sphere is discreted from my body, and is not properly me. Furthermore, my body, which is in space, is discreted from my spirit, which is not in space, and yet my body is not properly me; and again, my love, or emotional nature—the central me, or inmost, of which you cannot predicate size or duration, is discreted from my spiritual form in which it appears; and it is of this inmost or central me that manhood or personality is properly predicable. In like manner is God the Central Manhood of the universe—the Inmost Personality, Humanity, and Divinity, discreted from all things else. What a theology is this! In a subsequent article I will show how this Divinity is united with the humanity of all earths and all times, constituting Him, in the largest sense, a worshipful Being.

Pittsburg, Pa., July 30, 1851.

A healthy liver weighs nearly four pounds, but diseased ones become four or five times heavier.

The human brain is the twenty-eighth of the body; but in the horse but a four-hundredth.

THE PROGRESS OF NATIONS.

It is an astonishing progress that of the human race. The nations do not advance abreast, nor is the progress of each continuous. In early times we find one far ahead of the rest—the sole foundation of knowledge and civilization—drawing all others to its light, or conquering them by its arms. Ninevah and Babylon, Greece, Rome, rose in turn to the zenith; and as each “universal empire” arose, its predecessors were not only eclipsed, but they commenced a downward progress, which had degradation or barbarism for its terminus. Since the fall of ancient Rome, we have seen Italy under the Popes, Spain under the successors of Ferdinand and Isabella, rise into the ascendant, and again fall back in apathy. After a long struggle, in which all civilized nations took part, we have recently seen England emerge first, and France second, from the strife for supremacy; but in the latter nation the national effervescence seems already past, and in her brave but pleasure-seeking multitudes, the seeds of decay are paving the way for her successor, which may already be seen rising into colossal size amid the mists and snows of the North. The supremacy of France has ever been on land, and so also will be its successor’s: the sea, the isles, and the New world are forever the heritage of the Anglo-Saxons. The firmest, the most glorious of empires cannot win for itself immortality. Long continued prosperity in nations, as in individuals saps the foundations of the higher qualities of our nature, and renders them no longer fit to be the leaders of human progress and civilization. It was this that utterly destroyed Babylonia, Persia and Egypt; it was this that prostrated the giant power of Rome; it is this that will ever cause the leadership of nations to pass from one people to another to the end of time. It is a strange yet instructive subject of reflection, this rise and fall of empires. There is no mystery about it—no Fate, as the old Greeks or the modern Atheists would say. Here, as in everything else, men are free agents, and reap the fruits of their actions. As long as nation’s religious principles can withstand the corrupting influence of long-continued success and artificial civilization, she has nothing to fear—the Suckmah will surround her still; but to do so immortally, alas! would be more than human. The black drop which Mahomet’s good angel squeezed from his heart must first be expressed from those of the whole species.—*Dublin University Mag.*

Oil of roses is the oil which swims at the top, in the distillation of roses.

The greatest artificial cold ever produced was 91.

The earth is believed to increase in heat one degree in every fifteen or twenty yards in depth.

The heat of an oven applied to a dead human body, for twelve days, reduced it from 120 to 12 pounds.

The human body, in a healthy state, is generally at ninety-eight degrees of Fahrenheit.

EDITORIAL.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, SEPT. 6, 1851.

ANALOGIES.

The estimate which different persons will form of the good accomplished by manifestations from the spiritual world, will, of course, depend on the relative position, so to speak, from which this subject is considered. If the external world be convinced by these manifestations, of its connection with the spiritual world, then we can see how vast, how magnificent, how glorious and divine, that good is, which has thus been brought about. Or if we overlook this great good, and only suffer what has been done to excite our hope for peculiar characteristics in the manifestations, which may not have been necessarily included in their original design, then we may, indeed, be disappointed when our hopes are not gratified. When hope is unduly excited, it is best it should be disappointed.

The doctrine of eternal universal progression is true. Hence, if we observe what seems to us to be discordant in Nature's developments, this will afford us, in the end, so much the better opportunities for noticing the advances which the laws of Association, Progression, and Development, have made in the great whole of the universe. God and Nature make what we call the universe. If we contemplate, then, (as so ably shown in Mr. Courtney's article, in our present number,) God as the cause, and Nature as the effect, we shall be assisted in our efforts to get at the truth, when we enquire as to what Nature says on any subject.

All her developments, we are told, have respect to use. The mineral kingdom exists only for the use of the vegetable; and the vegetable kingdom exists only for the use of the animal; and the animal kingdom exists only for the use of the mental or spiritual.

But the vegetable, in respect to time and space, is not equal to the mineral. The fruits, or that part of the vegetable kingdom which is of use to animals, is small when compared with that part which is left. And those animals which are good for man are few, when compared with the multitudes which man rejects. So, also, with the human race. As infancy is before manhood, there must be more children than men. The largest portion die, it is said, before they reach maturity. And even if all infants lived to maturity, it would not follow, from this, that they would all be MEN, in the wisdom faculty, at the same time that they became men in physical stature. In the race, con-

sidered as a whole, there are but comparatively few aged people—few that are very intelligent. Thus, Nature's analogies or correspondences may be traced from the lowest to the highest. It is the *gold* that is scarce. There are metals enough, but they are not gold. It is the *rare* fruit that we want; there are vegetables enough, but not of the kind to gratify the appetite of man. There are human beings enough, but few philosophers, in comparison with the whole.

The food received into the stomach is not all assimilated into the human form; the air we breathe does not, all of it, become a part of our nature. Throughout each of the kingdoms constituting this world, the remark is true, that the further down we go towards the mineral, the coarser, and greater the quantity.

From these analogies we may see why it is that it is so difficult for the *higher spheres* to communicate with the lower. Indeed, it may be admitted as an *axiom*, that the highest do not, in any case, *directly* communicate with the lowest at all. They do so mediately, but not directly. How do the lowest, in human governments, communicate with the sovereign? How does the humble citizen, in our own country, communicate with the highest in authority? Does he unceremoniously rush into the presence of the President, unbidden and unknown?

And is it not marvellous that mortals who call for spirits whom they never knew on earth, do not once imagine how manifestly inappropriate such calls often are? A call is made for the spirit of some hero, "prophet," or "apostle," between whom and the mortal making this call, there is not, and never was, any *relation* which could by any possibility make the parties acquainted one with another! True, "sounds" may be made in answer to such calls, or apocryphal spirits may come without being called, and announce themselves under names well known to the circle and to the world. But who those spirits are no mortal knows, and under the present circumstances, perhaps no mortal can know.

That they are not spirits from the higher spheres, we know, the same as we should infer when one calls out in a crowd for the President of these United States.—Some one may answer, but is it the President? Who ever saw him? Who of the present company, ever heard his voice? And even if it should happen to be the President, who knows him well enough to say whether it be him or not?

A stranger visits England. Does he make his first call on the Queen or some nobleman? And how is a stranger to gain

audience with persons of distinction, without some mediator, some one to bring about an acquaintance between them. And this mediator must be familiar with both parties. Mortals sometimes imagine that a spirit, by virtue of its relation to the spiritual world, must or can have personal knowledge of all other spirits! But the idea is preposterous. Spirits must be limited in their knowledge of spirits, the same or similarly as mortals are limited in their acquaintance with mortals here. Mortals would smile if a foreigner were to land on our shores, and rush, without acquaintance or ceremony, into the presence of our most distinguished citizens. The foreigner, though in our midst, does not thereby become entitled to notice from citizens of rank who are far above him. His having heard that there was such a person as Dr. Benjamin Franklin, in our country, does not make him acquainted with that philosopher, nor entitle him to encroach on his time or attention; nor would the stranger's estimate of himself, his character, or mission, be allowed as a passport to an audience of one far above him. And yet he would find persons in the streets, perhaps, low enough to talk with him, and even pretend to answer for George Washington, Andrew Jackson, James Madison, and others whom the nation and the world had delighted to honor. And if the stranger knew no better, he might go back and report to his neighbors the conversations he had held with those distinguished men! And he would have precisely as much authority for such reports, as could be given for similar interviews, said to have been held by mortals recently, with the spirits of prophets and apostles. And it would be equally difficult to convince the deluded mortals of their mistake, as much in the one case as the other. The human mind when once fascinated with error, cannot often be suddenly set free. Nevertheless, the laws of eternal progression will dissipate the mists of discord and imperfection. They may be slow, indeed, but sure, conserving all of Nature's alternations to an immortal and progressive existence, evolved and perpetuated by the inherent, independent, unvarying, universal, and eternal laws of the Infinite God.

INFORMATION.

Heat and Light.

Since our last we have received the first number of

"Heat and Light for the Nineteenth Century, embracing the Trine of Theology, Philosophy, and Science; designed to show the Perfect Marriage of all Good and all Truth, and to aid in the Establishment of the New Heaven and the New Earth.—Conducted by an Association of Gentle-

men. Published by Otis Clapp, 23 School street, Boston."

The principal article is a Review of A. J. Davis by W. M. Fernald. It is sold for twelve-and-a-half cents per number.

New Church Repository.

The August number contains an article from Mr. W. M. Fernald, on "The Eternity of Evil, and the Hells." Mr. F. undertakes to show that Swedenborg is not reliable as authority in favor of the doctrine of absolute evil. The editor replies to Mr. F., and maintains an opposite view, and Professor Bush argues (if we understand him) that Swedenborg, during his "illumination," was INFALLIBLE!

Sectarianism.

Mr. Fernald (in his article against "the Eternity of Evil," in the New Church Repository,) asks the editor, and New Churchmen generally, to "attend to" him, from the fact of his recent conversion to Swedenborgianism:

"Perhaps you will the more readily attend to me when I inform you of my recent and undoubted conviction of the great fundamental principles of the revelations of Swedenborg. For a number of years I have been much interested in spiritual philosophy; but not till recently have I been able to see the grandeur and truth of what, to a New Churchman, is the crowning glory of all faith. I refer to the truth of the Divine Humanity. When I tell you that my spirit assents to this, that my affections are newly touched, my reason relieved and refreshed, my whole nature penetrated with a satisfactory influence, at which, I assure you, no one can be more amazed than myself; and when I tell you that I am more and more inclined to Swedenborg's theory of the interior sense of the Scriptures and to his teachings in general, I think you may be induced to an endeavor, both for my sake and some others of your readers, to satisfy me on another head, where, I confess, after long and continued thought, I cannot come to an agreement with Swedenborg."

Now, it is instructive to notice with what characteristic or sectarian exclusiveness this humble confession of a novice Swedenborgian is met by the reply of Professor Bush. He confesses to "an impression of unfairness in W. M. F.'s reasoning;"—thinks Mr. F. has "a very poor way" of winning regard for Swedenborg; says he (Mr. F.) evinces a sort of "driving, dashing, headlong hardihood of induction, which is not at all troubled by any want of obvious connection between antecedents and consequents;" and finally concludes that W. M. F., is not yet sectarian enough to be fully entitled to the sympathy he craves:

"He may have undergone great mental revolutions on many points of his faith, but he surely needs another still, if he does not yet perceive the inexhaustible truth of Swedenborg's doctrine on this head.

"We have no disposition (says Prof. B.) to disparage the signal change that has

taken place in our friend's experience, but we fear he gives himself undue credit for a willingness to embrace views directly contrary to those he has so long cherished."

Such is the sectarian principle, you must "go the whole figure" or nothing. We once made a similar confession to Mr. A. J. Davis, and after expressing so much regard for his "Divine Revelations," we thought, of course, that he would give us a friendly shake of the hand! But we soon found that we were not sectarian enough for Mr. Davis or his friends, love him and them ever so much.

This sectarian principle contains the element of *jealousy*—it admits of no division in the affections, no rivalry.

Spiritual Affinities.

An intelligent correspondent, under date of August 17, 1851, says:

"An M. D. skeptic, and valiant and brave an opposer of the science as ever donned the learned spectacles, after nerving himself with a draft of good old 'Cogniac,' came to the circle with some thirty or forty questions and cross-questions written down in a little book, to ask some of his guardian medical spirits. Every answer was wrong, which gratified him no little. Finally he was asked if it would be satisfactory to him to give his little book containing the questions, to the lady who sat next to him, and who was an entire stranger to all in the room. He said it would, when she took the book, and asked the questions by pointing to them, when every question was answered correctly!"

"Light" Wanted.

Mr. Fernald, in his "Heat and Light" review of Mr. Davis, uses the terms "fallen man," and "regeneration." What does he mean by these terms? Was the human race ever in a higher state of goodness and truth, than now? And if so, *when?* and *where?* And we do not ask what the "fall" is, but what was the *cause?*

"Most Ancient Times."

Swedenborg frequently refers to the "most ancient times," when the race of men were more holy than at present:

"In the most ancient times, men were informed concerning heavenly things, or those which relate to eternal life by immediate intercourse with the angels of heaven."—A. C. 10,354.

And a similar idea is advanced by Mr. A. J. Davis, who represents that for a long period the race were innocent and happy, until they were advanced so as to have a more perfect knowledge of language.—Now we conceive these representations to be contrary to all of Nature's analogies, and especially to the doctrine of eternal progression. What, then, is the authority on which these representations are made about the human race?

Gigantic error, like gigantic crimes, when committed by the multitude, forbid

investigation by their enormity, and thus they are suffered to remain till they become a part of our religion, and too sacred to be touched.

Seth Hinshaw.

Friend Hinshaw requests us to state that in his letter [see page 45, vol. III.] he forgot to mention that Mr. C. H. Bowen refused to take any pay for sittings spoken of, at Mr. B.'s house.

Sappy.

A Mr. Reed, of Mendon, Mass., gives the following description of "the instrument" to be used for finding "water courses in the earth:—"

"It is very simple. A green forked stick of almost any kind of wood, answers a very good purpose. *Sprouts of recent growth, full of sap,* are the best. Two pieces of whalebone, or elastic steel, about twenty inches long, of a size that will bend easily, fastened together at one end, will answer all practical purposes."

"Sprouts of recent growth, and full of sap." This refers more, probably, to the persons who use these instruments, than to the instruments themselves. "Whalebone," we believe, is not a good conductor of electricity, but any "green" or *sappy* head or body is a better conductor, and when two such "sprouts" happen to come in contact, no doubt the "experiment" will succeed to a charm.

"Not Asleep."

A "Second Advent" preacher, who advocates the sleep of the spirit in the grave, (at our tea-table, one day,) had the following message spelled out to him by the invisibles:

"Spirits do not sleep in the grave."

It was felt as a most appropriate rebuke:

* "Oh no! they're not sleeping,
They watch o'er us yet;
The love they once bore us
They ne'er can forget.

And we'll greet them again
When life's journey has sped;
Oh no! they're not sleeping,
Oh no! they're not dead."

Discordant Spirits.

When, in the first number of this paper, more than one year ago, we spoke of "discordant spirits," and "mediums" that were not "reliable," it was not well received by some friends of the Harmonial Philosophy. But the developments of the past year have abundantly shown the importance of the caution we uttered.

We often hear of discordant manifestations by spirits. A young lady visits church on Sunday, and her associate spirit, or the spirit by whom she is *obsessed*, (purporting to be Dr. B. Franklin!) snatches the hymn book from her hand, and pro-

duces other disturbances, which finally compel her to leave the house!

A young man called on us, a few days since, who was a medium, but finding himself *deceived* and injured, as he says, by a spirit or spirits, he dismissed them. One of them spelled out to him, "I have come to torment you!"

We have various reports of similar cases, which go to show the necessity of *integrity, intelligence, and caution*, in all who have anything to do with this subject.

Lectures in Bangor, Me.

Thursday of next week the editor commences a course of Lectures on the Spiritual World, in Bangor, Me. Can *audible, visible, tangible* MANIFESTATIONS be made to mortals, from departed spirits? "Witchcraft," "Apparitions," "Guardian Angels." What is the Condition of all after Death? The certainty of Immortality. The Intercommunion of Mortals with the World of Spirits: its Dangers, and the Uses to which these momentous truths should be applied.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 22, 1851.

Dear Friend Sunderland,—Our little circle in this place continues to meet weekly. We have no particular news to write you. We are much pleased with the *Spirit World*, especially with the present volume thus far. We hope and pray that you may be strengthened for the great work you have in hand.

All I can do for you shall be done joyfully and earnestly.

Yours in love, F. GALE.

Foxboro', Mass, Aug. 25, 1851.

Mr. Sunderland,—Dear Sir: In your paper of the 16th inst., in connection with the notice of your visit to this place, I observe my name is mentioned as a believer in what you term the "Harmonial Philosophy."* I hardly know if I understand you in your use of these words. I thought, perhaps, that you might employ them to designate the theory or system of belief, as entertained by yourself and others, and the general doctrine of "spheres," as taught by Swedenborg and that class of philosophers. I cannot say, however, that I am a believer in Swedenborg's views, as relates to the doctrine of the spheres. I have heretofore thought that they could not be true; and I am quite confident that there is no such low order of spirits in the spiritual world, as he would teach. There are other parts of his doctrine, however, and of what is termed the spiritual theory, that I have very decided belief in: as, for instance, that heaven is about us; that it is here,

* Not exactly, so, brother. I did not say "believer," but "a true and firm friend;" and that you are a friend to the Harmonial Philosophy, your letter above is sufficient to show.—Ed.

there, everywhere, wherever there is a true soul that is made meet for the indwelling spirit of God. I am of the opinion, and am fully persuaded in it, that the spirits of the departed dwell in close proximity to us, though their spheres may be wide apart from our own. I find great satisfaction in the belief that these spirits are cognizant of what is doing in this world; that they wait and attend upon us, and are interested in whatever relates to our welfare. They know our thoughts, as God knows them, and our communications are open and comprehensible to them; and I know of no reason why theirs may not be open to us—why they may not, at least, be suggestive of thought to us, at times.

But after all, that spirits are communicating to us through the "rappings," so called, I am not convinced. I can not satisfy my mind or persuade myself that it is so; and yet, of some things, some very singular manifestations, which I have witnessed myself, I do not know what to say or think of them. I am sure that the subject is deserving of an investigation; and it is of no use to say that we will not investigate it, for it will have to be investigated, sooner or later. There will be those to believe in these manifestations, as the communications of spirits, until some more reasonable explanation is given of the matter. To "Poh!" at it is not to answer it. It will not satisfy sensible minds to treat it in this manner; it accords with nothing but bigotry, and, thank God, I am no bigot, concerning this or any other subject, and I hope never to be. I expect, if I were to live a hundred years, I should know more than I do now, though there may be those in our world with whom it is a doubtful question whether they would or not. They have learned out a great while ago, and all new truth to them is old darkness or error. I have no such feeling as this, myself. My motto is, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." And if you will be so kind as to insert this brief communication in the *Spirit World*, I will think you, and promise you it shall set all right, so far as I, myself, am concerned.

Yours, for the truth,

H. SLADE.

Glen's Falls, N. Y., Aug. 25, 1851.

Friend Sunderland,—I have succeeded in procuring seven subscribers toward the twelve papers I ordered of you. "Sectarianism" prevails here, even among some who profess better things. It has attempted to prevent the circulation of the *Spirit World*, and also to "manage" everything appertaining to spiritualism in this place. And there has been so much nonsense and falsehood among the "spirits," that it has broken up the "Harmonial Circle." One spirit, calling himself "Darius Cole," has figured largely in this place. His works have been of the rowdy stamp, though at times he has manifested much intelligence. He sometimes calls himself Darius Coles—at other times he has other names.

A young man from Bolton, on the western shore of Lake George, about twenty miles north of this village, told me that a sister of his had become a writing medium, and many of her communications were very much above what she could do without having some superior assistance. Also, another person has, of late, become a medium, in the town of Argyle, east of our place. I have not heard of anything particularly new in their writings.

Some of the mediums in our place have denied the whole as to there being anything spiritual about the affair; saying they themselves have deceived or imagined the whole of it. You see by this how I am situated. My chance for investigation is not very good.

As far as I can ascertain, in this vicinity it acts something like a contagious disease. First, a person went to the centre of the State, and brought back a medium. His neighbors called to see what was going on at his house. Some were immediately under its influence; others, after returning home; and again, others have gone home to their families without being affected in the least, but after telling what they have seen, some one or more of their families have fallen under its influence. Such was the case with the persons in Bolton and Argyle. I know not what to think of all this.

My wife has been a clairvoyant for more than ten years, and believes that she saw spirits years before the rappings commenced in Western New York. But she is not a medium, and we have no manifestations that we can rely on as spiritual. To be sure, there have been some things that we could not account for. Twice, the slip in which she was sitting, in church, was rapidly shaken for some time, when no one but herself was in it or the adjoining slip. Also, while I was writing the account that I sent you of the rappings that were heard so long ago, I heard distinct raps, which I could not account for, and which lasted, I should think, half an hour. Again, while I was writing the next letter to you, I heard the same noise, and in the same place; but I have not heard it since, though often desired it, for it was delightful.

I earnestly desire the truth, but whether I shall know more of these matters, I cannot say. One thing I can say with you, "I am connected with no church, subscribe to no creed, and do not know of any sect or circle whose dogmas I receive."

Yours, wishing that I may soon know whether these manifestations are really what they purport to be, or not,

E. W. KNIGHT.

Providence, R. I., Sept. 1, 1851.

Dear Sir,—The communication from Mr. Capron, in the last number of the *Spirit World*, has induced me to read his book once more, to see how far I may have failed in getting at the doctrine which he designed to teach in it. On page 65 (second edition), I find the following language:

"But, says one who has hardly spent

an hour in making the test, and who has got wrong answers, 'They are proved to be lying spirits.' Perhaps such an argument is good. If it is in this case, it will prove all men to be liars, because we meet untruthful persons, occasionally or often. The logic is as good in the one case as in the other. To all who have seen fit to accuse these manifestations of evil, we would put this question—DID YOU EVER KNOW OF AN ANSWER GIVEN, OR A MESSAGE OR A SENTENCE SPELLED OUT, THAT HAD A TENDENCY TO EVIL?—We know of none who have been able to answer in the affirmative. We know of those who think the theological teachings wrong, but that cannot be proved; and there is abundance of proof of right direction and positive good in the matter. Some will answer that 'evil spirits act thus in order the more effectually to deceive.' Well, we insist that as long as they act in accordance with goodness and truth, they are not to be condemned as evil, on the surmise of some bigoted devil-believers."

I quote the above to show where I got my impression from, that E. W. Capron did not believe in "evil spirits" till he was better informed by reading "The Spiritual Philosopher." That Mr. Capron was benefitted by the "Phebe Newel case," is manifest from the use he made of it. From Mr. Capron's articles published in the Messenger, and his communication in the Spirit World, I should not have inferred what is affirmed and denied above:

1. Spirits never tell lies.
2. Spirits do nothing which tend to evil. When he wrote his book, he knew of nothing of this kind.
3. Though the spirits may make mistakes, they teach the true theology.
4. Spirits always act in accordance with goodness and truth.
5. Those who charge the spirits with evil, are "bigoted devil-believers."

Mr. C.'s quibble about the title of his book, is unworthy of notice. I quoted from its advertisement in the Spiritual Philosopher, where the title that I gave it will be found.

I was not aware that Mr. Capron had endorsed so fully for the theological teachings of the spirits, till now; and from which it would seem that he receives, or at least he does not reject, the spirit-teachings, so called, at Auburn. "All right," if he is so disposed.
E. G.

The best mode of revenge is not to imitate the injury.

Air, of the density of that near the earth, would be opaque in the thickness of seventeen miles.

There is no man, let him be as wise as he may, who knows what circumstances are calculated to make him really happy.

Mercury for thermometers is purified by agitation in a bottle with sand, and then by straining it through leather.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SCIENCE, EDUCATION, HEALTH.

[Original.]

DARKNESS OVERCOME.

Dearest, O dreary was the hour
When thy pure spirit took its flight;
Then bowed our hearts to Sorrow's power,
And Grief o'erspread us like the night.

Lost to us that bright creation,
Which cheered our life's dull path along,
Fled like some sweet exhalation,
Or like the echo of a song,

O, the deep anguish of our parting—
O, the keen bitterness of woe!
Hotter tears were never starting—
Keener sorrow none may know.

But, lo! a light breaks in around us,
Dispelling darkness by its ray;
The spells of woe that sore have bound us,
Are broken now, and passed away.

The eye of Faith surmounts the limit
That bounds the range of mortal sight,
Nor earthly vapors more may dim it—
It gazes free in heavenly light.

It sees thee, dearest, dwelling nigh us,
And mingling yet thy love with ours,
Sustaining us 'mid scenes which try us,
Encouraging our lagging powers.

Whispering ever Hope's sweet story,
Luring us to holy themes,
Lending Virtue's paths new glory,
Mingling heaven with our dreams.

Ever round us blissful smiling,
Folding us within thy wings.
Sin avoiding, care beguiling,
Aiding our pure aspirations.

Sorrow fades before thy breath,
Gloomy shadows backward flee,
The sting is taken now from Death,
The Grave hath lost its victory.

Tyro.

Boston, August 19, 1851.

"A REGULAR PRACTITIONER."

The members of the medical faculty, here and elsewhere, are great sticklers for what they term the regular practice. Many of them, indeed, carry this feeling so far, that they would prefer killing a patient by a prescription administered in the regular unprofessional remedy for his disease. There are exceptions, however, to this general rule, and one notable instance we are about to relate.

In the summer of '48, about the period of the close of the Mexican war, one of the officers of our army—an amateur zoologist—returning home from the scenes of his perils and his glory, brought with him a number of rare insects and animals, indigenous to Mexico. He put up for some time at the St. Charles Hotel, where his cabinet of natural curiosities

attracted much attention. Among them was a living ichneumon fly, a repulsive looking animal, of the most destructive instincts, that would destroy and devour ants and other insects with a most sanguinary rapacity. A gentleman, whom for the nonce we shall call Jones, was at the time stopping in the St. Charles, and he formed for the ichneumon a strong dislike; indeed, having once seen it, he could not bear again to look at it. He was a man of kindly nature and generous qualities. His mind was genial and sociable to a fault and this sometimes led him into convivial excesses which tended to cloud a mind and confuse an understanding, which were otherwise strong, clear, and comprehensive.

About the time we speak of, he indulged to such an extent in a debauch, that mania-a-potu followed. He was no sooner seized with this disease, than the ichneumon seized upon his distempered imagination. The single obnoxious animal multiplied into ten thousand. They covered his body, he thought, and like so many vampires, were sucking the life's blood from him. He looked out in the room, and saw them engaged in a most deadly conflict with grotesque red and blue monkeys; and they were drawn up in solid column all round the mosquito bar to prevent his escape.

His nerves were unstrung, his brain was fevered, and his distress of mind could not have been greater if his apprehensions had been founded on reality, instead of being, as they were, the emanations of a disordered imagination. Under the circumstances, his friends concluded to send for Dr.—, one of our most eminent city physicians, with the view of his prescribing something to allay the nervous irritability of the patient. They did send for him, and soon after, the doctor arrived smoking his segar, caring nothing about the antics of ichneumons or the pranks of red monkeys. As he entered the room, he found the patient engaged in a vigorous conflict with some imaginary enemy beneath the mosquito bar, acting more, however, it would seem, on the defensive than the offensive. Now he would slap his hand across his face as if to drive something off his nose; now he would draw up his knee and make a spasmodic kick towards the foot of the bed; now he would make his open hand resound on his shoulder, and now again on his thigh. The odds against him seemed to be overpowering, yet he battled manfully. The doctor saw at once what his disease was, and at once he resolved to resort to a quick remedy for its cure.

"Don't you think, Doctor," said a friend of the patient—who, by the way, was a regular practitioner too—"don't you think phlebotomy would have an excellent effect in his case?"

"Don't think it would," said the Doctor.

"I am sure," said the nurse, who believed that hydropathy was a cure for all diseases, "I'm sure that if he got a cold bath and his temples bathed with ice, it would afford him great relief."

"Fiddle sticks," said the doctor—puffing his cigar as unconcernedly as before.

"I have seen a man laboring under a

similar malady"—said the bar-keeper of the establishment, who felt a strong friendship for the patient, and who was present at this quasi-medical consultation—"and gentle purgatives gave him immediate relief."

"You did—did you?" said the doctor.

"I did," said the bar-keeper.

"What a pity," said the doctor, "that you did not publish the fact in the columns of the Medical Journal!"

While this conversation was going on, poor Jones, who had taken lessons in boxing from Roper, was availing himself of his knowledge of the art of self-defence, to beat off the hideous enemy. The doctor approached the bed, saying, when he got there, "Halloo, Jones"—they were on terms of familiar intimacy with one another—"Halloo, Jones, what are you about, what are you driving at?"

"O, doctor!" said poor Jones, the perspiration running down his face, and fear seated in his eyes—"O, doctor, can't you drive off those ichneumons? There, there!" (Here he gave his ear a crack.) "That fellow was striving to get into my ear."

"So you are troubled with the ichneumons, are you?" said the doctor.

"Troubled with them!" said Jones. "I'm tortured, I'm maddened to death with them!"

"Well, I must try and relieve you," said the doctor, and laying his cigar on the table, he took up a boot-jack that lay before him, and just as Jones had turned over to have a tussle with an imaginary ichneumon, the doctor gave him a lusty crack with the boot-jack on the posteriors, that made him bounce in the bed, which bounce made the bed shake.

"Halloo, doctor!" said Jones "what are you about?"

"Just chasing off the ichneumons," said the doctor, and he gave Jones another lick with the boot-jack, striking him in the same place.

"Murder, murder!" said Jones; "you'll kill me."

"No," said the doctor, repeating the blow, "but I'll kill the ichneumons," and poor Jones received another lick with the boot-jack well laid on. "Murder, murder, save me—save me," said Jones, jumping out of bed, running around the room, followed by the doctor, plying the boot-jack all the time.

"O, enough! enough, doctor," said Jones, getting behind a rocking chair to shield himself from the boot-jack.

"Then you cry enough, do you?" said the doctor.

"Too much—altogether too much," said Jones.

"Do you see any ichneumons now?" said the doctor.

"Not one," said Jones.

"I thought not," said the doctor—"get to bed now," and Jones, his thighs covered over with red blotches, the imprints of the boot-jack, quietly went to bed.

"Now take this," said the doctor, filling out a pint bottle of London porter, in which he put an opiate, and Jones, as submissive as a child, swallowed it as ordered. He soon fell asleep, and after a long and refreshing one, awoke well. Poor fellow! he is since dead, but as

long as he lived, he never again saw an ichneumon.—*N. O. Delta.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON.—It has fallen to the lot of but a few now upon the stage to have seen General Washington. Among the few, is Mr. Boylston, the venerable senior editor of the Amherst Cabinet. He states that when seven years old he saw him at Springfield in this State, in 1789. Washington was on a visit to the arsenal, where his dignified and commanding appearance attracted the observance of all, especially the boys. Says Mr. Boylston—"His cocked hat, from under which protruded the staid ear-locks, and the stately tie-behind, powdered white as snow, in the ancient style, are perfectly recollected, and are ever brought vividly to mind, whenever viewing the likenesses of him representing him in that costume. As he walked round among the stacks of glistening small arms and the grisly big guns in the 'public stores,' he was closely beset by the boys, as is their way, intensely gazing in his face, eagerly catching every word and gleam of his benignant countenance for future remembrance. As an appendage to the cavalcade which escorted him, the boys rode on canes and sticks, following the procession, delighted as any in their parts of the grand exhibition—shouting 'We've seen him, we've seen George Washington.' There were present in that procession, many Revolutionary characters, in their cocked hats and other dress peculiar to the times."

A PECULIAR SITUATION.—A few evenings since, two young men went to the residence of two young ladies, on Fifth street, Cincinnati, to make a social call. The heat was very oppressive; they adjourned from the parlor to the door steps, where they seated themselves. An hour was spent in social chat, when the young ladies were called to attend some duties inside the house. On their return, after some minutes absence, they found both of the young gallants stretched on the door-steps fast asleep. The girls resolved not to disturb their slumbers, but extinguished the lights, and retired for the night. The beaux slept on till they were awakened by the watchmen, who demanded to know what they were doing in that situation? They were astonished on finding the doors closed against them, and nobody stirring in the house; and on ascertaining that it was two o'clock in the morning, they were dumbfounded.—Explaining matters to the watchmen they were allowed to travel about their business, which they did, feeling about as flat as diluted dishwater.

Oil of walnuts and walnut soap are specifics for the removal of pimples and cutaneous blotches.

Never condemn a friend unheard, or without letting him know his accuser or his crime.

The waters of the Red Sea appear to be thirty-two feet higher than the Mediterranean; and the Gulf of Mexico is twenty-three feet higher than the Pacific.

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